

Gettin' Familiar...

Here at Blue Monday Monthly, we feel you should get a personal introduction to some of our favorite artists, including intimate insights and catchin' up on what they got goin' on. Read on....

Artist Name: Janice Harrington
AKA: The Great Grand Ma

Described by the international press as warm-hearted and unique, it is hardly surprising that every audience celebrates Janice Harrington's performance and that at 80 years old she is still active.

Born in 1942 in Cleveland, Ohio, with a stopover in Norway, she now lives in Germany with her husband, trombonist and piano builder Werner Gürtler. Known as a versatile artist, she masters blues, jazz and gospel singing, as well as acting and music production, and looks back on a decades long career that has carried her around the world.

Ms. Harrington began her music career in 1967 singing for the US military in USO shows produced by the North American Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and traveled to Vietnam, Southeast Asia, the Panama Canal, Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland, Scotland and Ireland.

A personal highlight was singing for Bishop Desmond Tutu in Oslo at the award ceremonies of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. Ms. Harrington has appeared on stage with artists such as Billy Daniels, Nat Adderley, Lloyd Bridges, Frank Sinatra Jr., Big Jay McNeely, Sammy Davis Jr. and Lionel Hampton, and in Oslo as the opening act for Joan Armatrading in 1982 and 1983 for Jose Feliciano. In 1989, together with the Kenn Lending Blues Band, as the opening act for BB King in Copenhagen.

Ms. Harrington has also performed with various Big Bands around the world including the NDR Radio Big Band and the Danish Radio Big Band. Ms. Harrington has also appeared at the International Bansko Jazz Festival in Bulgaria, and in various festival programs worldwide. She also toured France for several Hot Clubs in the 90s, accompanied by Georges Arvanitas, Michel Denis, Carl Schlosser, Boss Queraud.

Ms. Harrington also has many CD's to her credit, including the Dinah Washington tribute album "Yesterday Today Tomorrow" featuring the giants of jazz Keter Betts, Lloyd Mayers and Jimmy Cobb.

Her stage career includes off-Broadway productions of "Norman ... Is That You?" (1970) and Shakespeare's "Two Gentlemen From Verona" (1973). She has also written her own plays: Musicals "Streets of Harlem" (Oslo 1982), "Girl Talk" (Oslo 1983) in cooperation with Karin Krog and "What My Eyes Have Seen" (Hamburg 1989), a musical autobiography whose updated version (Hamburg 2018) has received exuberant reviews.

Ms. Harrington has also written and produced the gospel musical "The Roots of Gospel and Spirituals", in 2013, and produced "The 1st International Jazz, Blues and Gospel Festival" in Las Vegas, and in 1995 the First North German Gospel and Spiritual Festival, for which she won as patron Gerhard Schröder, then Lower Saxony's Prime Minister. She is not a stranger to TV, where she once appeared as a guest on the American TV series "Days Of Our Lives" and most recently in 2018 as a finalist on the first season of The Voice Senior in Germany.

Ms. Harrington is still active as a Jazz Ambassador and State Department Cultural Ambassador during Black History Month, holding Workshops and Master classes. From 2000 until the present, she has focused on working with young people and people with disabilities. So she has earned the title "Germany's Lady of the Gospel" honestly.

She and Dylan Vaughn are currently offering the African-American music workshop "Sing Out!", which they have been teaching successfully since 2006, now online.



Label: Hip And Happy Records

Discography: '80 Years Of International Friendship'; 'Yesterday Today And Tomorrow, A Tribute to Dinah Washington'; 'Move On' with the Farmers Road Blues Band (all available thru her website). Check out Janice on Amazon for her FULL catalog

Website and/or social media links: www.janice-harrington.com; www.facebook.com/janice.harrington.3

1) How did you get into music? I tell everyone I began to sing in my mother's tummy. I feel what a woman eats, how she feels is very important for the unborn child. My mother sung in the "Voices of Victory" Gospel Choir in Los Angeles. Billy Preston's mother was the pianist. So I say I was born singing.

2) What artist inspired you the most? I have actually been inspired by many, Bessie Smith, Dinah Washington, however I saw Dizzy Gillespie in a concert in Bergen, Norway and it was life changing.

3) What never fails to make you smile? Being with my Family.

4) Do you prefer playing festivals or small intimate venues and why? I love both. Festivals because I love a big stages, but small clubs are great too because it gives you the opportunity to be close to the public.

5) Who is the most interesting person you have met and why? Dizzy Gillespie meeting him changed my approach to the stage.. I learned that it was so important to not only be a good musician but to talk to the people and have a good sense of humor. He was all of that and I have tried to incorporate that spirit into my shows. My act is a cross between Millie Jackson, Tina Turner, Ma Rainey, and Moms Mabley.

6) What is your favorite comfort food and why? Popcorn! No reason I just love it! and Bar B Que

7) What's the best concert you've ever seen? Dizzy Gillespie in Bergen, Norway

8) What is your favorite guilty pleasure and why? Just having a lazy day with hopes that my Fairy Godmother will come and get all the house work done, because I have been sitting on the computer all day.

9) What/ who do you listen to when you are on the road? I still love Old School Music, Blues, Jazz and Gospel.

10) What's the best advice anyone has ever given to you? Lionel Hampton told me after a gig with his band, that two Aries should not be working together and I should get my own show. and that is when I decided to move to Europe.

11) What's the most unbelievable-but-true thing that's ever happened to you? Meeting my 4th husband and having it last for 34 years and still in love.

12) Which item on your bucket list will be the easiest to tackle? The most difficult? To Remain in Europe is the easiest. To go back to the states to live with all the racism and political problems would be difficult.



Janice and Desmond Tutu



Janice and BB King